

Jorge Rafael VIDELA
(Phonetic: veeDEHla)

ARGENTINA

President (since
March 1976)

Addressed as:
Mr. President

OFFICE OF
CENTRAL REFERENCE



On 31 July 1978 Lt. Gen. Jorge Videla retired from his post as Commander in Chief of the Army and member of the ruling junta to become the civilian President of Argentina. Before his retirement he had served as military President and junta member since the March 1976 coup that overthrew President Maria de Peron. As such, he performed the ceremonial duties of chief of state, but he shared governing authority with the other members of the three-man junta, which represents the three services. Videla's new relationship with the junta is as yet unclear.

When Videla first became President, he inherited a country in near chaos, with uncontrolled inflation and rampant terrorist activity. Both problems have been significantly reduced under his government, but not eliminated.

In the past two and a half years, Videla has traveled extensively in Argentina and has met privately with representatives of religious, scientific, business and rural communities, as well as with members of the press. He has also made trips to other South American countries to strengthen relations. Videla came to the United States several times before becoming civilian President: in September 1977 he visited this country for the signing of the Panama Canal Treaties.

Early Life and Career

Jorge Rafael Videla was born into an army family on 2 August 1925 in the city of Mercedes in Buenos Aires Province. At 16 he entered the National Military College, where he was commissioned in 1944 as an infantry officer. His

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Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/SRP
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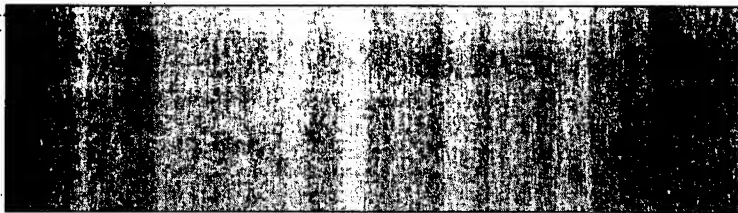
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first post was with the 14th Infantry Regiment in the central Province of Córdoba. In 1946 he was a lieutenant in the Vigilance Company in the Ministry of War; and for the next two years he served with the Motorized Army Regiment. Joining the Military College in 1948 as an instructor, he gained a reputation as an excellent teacher and a stern, self-denying taskmaster. Rising to the rank of captain, he attended the Higher School of War during 1951-54 and then returned to the Military College as a staff officer.

Videla was posted to the United States from 1956 to 1958 as adviser to the Office of the Military Attache in the Argentine Embassy; at the same time he served as an adviser to the Inter-American Defense Board. He was promoted to colonel in 1965. From 1962 to 1968 he was a staff officer in the Army General Command. He was appointed chief of the cadet corps in 1968 and, as a brigadier general, served as the commandant of the Military Academy from 1971 to 1973.

Videla served as chief of staff of the Army General Staff from December 1973 until May 1975 and then was unassigned for two months, undoubtedly because Mrs. Perón's advisers saw him as a potential coup organizer. In July they agreed to have him serve as chief of the Joint Staff, hoping to keep him in a relatively weak post. A few weeks later a confrontation between the military and the government over the appointment of the Minister of the Interior forced the Commander in Chief of the Army to resign, and in August 1975 Videla was chosen as a compromise candidate to succeed him.

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Personal Data

Videla is a lifelong professional soldier of unquestioned integrity, a strict moralist of the old school, and a devout Roman Catholic. His hatred

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of corruption and his religious devotion are legendary in Argentina. A tall, gaunt, hard-muscled figure in a plain uniform, Videla almost always appears in photographs as the model of military severity.

(25)(x1) His appearance has earned him the nicknames "El Hueso" (The Bone) and "El Flaco" (Skinny).

Reporters have described Videla as shy, diffident and nervous, with a no-nonsense approach that is often softened by ready smiles and gracious conversation. He does not like to hear off-color stories and prefers not to discuss his job, the infantry, or his children. He speaks English poorly.

Videla is married to the former Alicia Raquel Hartridge and is the father of seven children. Two of his sons are currently attending the Military Academy.

31 August 1978

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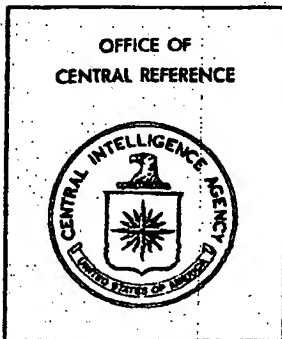
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Oscar Antonio MONTES
(Phonetic: MOHNtehs)

ARGENTINA

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Worship (since 1977)

Addressed as:
Mr. Minister



Vice Adm. Oscar Montes served as chief of naval operations of the Navy General Staff from 1974 until he assumed his current post. Montes' routine naval career (primarily ship-board duty) gave him little experience in foreign affairs or government administration. Since his appointment as Foreign Minister, however, he has become a spokesman for Argentina's positions on such international issues as human rights and nuclear power. In an October 1977 speech at the UN General Assembly, Montes defended Argentina's human rights policies and accused terrorist groups of being the main violators of human rights. He also discussed the subject with Secretary of State Cyrus Vance during the latter's visit to Argentina in November 1977.

In May 1978 Montes attended the UN Conference on Disarmament in New York, where he discussed Argentina's nuclear plans and program. [REDACTED]

In May 1977 Montes signed a trade and maritime transport agreement with China. Montes traveled to Romania in July 1978 to discuss trade and the exchange of science and technology. He has accepted an invitation to visit the USSR later this year for the same purpose. These overtures toward Communist countries are seen by many US officials as a reaction to the proposed US cutoff of military assistance and sales to Argentina in September 1978.

Montes, about 53, is married and has several children. He understands some English but speaks only Spanish.

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VP ~~visit~~ visit to Rome + Vatican, 9/2/78-9/4/78: ~~Program~~

~~Schedule~~

Meeting w Pres Videla of Argentina